

St. Rochus Croatian Catholic Church
Cambria City Neighborhood
800 Chestnut Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5762

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

St. Rochus Croatian Catholic Church

HABS No. PA-5762

Location: 800 Chestnut Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: St. Rochus Church faces northeast, set at the end of a block, with a church school and the rectory to the east and southwest, respectively. The structure is approximately 45' x 80' with a three-bay front by five bays deep. It is constructed of brick load-bearing walls. A square steeple with a lantern and a spire is incorporated into the front facade, along with three round-arched stained-glass windows and one round stained glass-window. There is a front stoop with four concrete steps and a sheet metal canopy. The front-gable roof has asphalt shingles. The foundation is constructed of cut stone.

The interior displays a semi-circular apse, plaster walls and a roof, and a gallery at the north end. The entire interior was altered and remodeled in 1973.

History: Led by Cambria City resident Bozo Goisovich, the Croatians of Johnstown founded the St. Rochus Society on May 13, 1894. The congregation split off from the Slovak congregation of St. Stephens. They formed Johnstown Chapter, Lodge #5 of the Croatian Fraternal Union, a tri-state coalition of Croatian societies, on September 2, 1894. The St. Rochus church building was constructed during 1900 and the spring of 1901, and formally dedicated April 14, 1901. Father Emery Kajic founded a parochial school in 1908. Construction of the present school building was begun in 1912 and completed in 1913. A convent also was constructed in this period. Affiliated parish organizations have included the Croatian Educational Society (1913), which evolved into Rodoljub, a singing society that met at 318 Chestnut Street.

Sources:

Deed and Tax Assessment Records, Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pa.

"Croatian Lodge Long Active Here," Johnstown Tribune-Democrat, July 25, 1953.

Interview with parish member Frank Krall, July 27, 1988.

"St. Rochus Church, 1900-1975," anniversary pamphlet (St. Rochus Church, 1975).

"Southwestern Pennsylvania Ethnic Records Survey," Pennsylvania Ethnic Heritage Studies Center, Archives of Industrial Society, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, 1980.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP). An overview of history of the city (HABS No. PA-5669) and an overview of the neighborhoods of Cambria City and Minersville (HABS No. PA-5672) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the downtown and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Jeffrey Hickey in August 1988 under the direction of Alison K.

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Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, the supervisory historian of the project. Hickey's and other project historians' work was published as The Character of a Steel Mill City: Four Historic Neighborhoods of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1989), edited by Kim E. Wallace. Illustrations in the publication include large format photographs taken by HAER photographer Jet Lowe and 35 mm photographs taken by the project historians.